



# Department of Justice

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## **ALBANIAN MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN ALIEN SMUGGLING CONSPIRACY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff of the Criminal Division and United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that Rustem Muho, also known as Galli Franco, pleaded guilty in federal District Court in Del Rio, Texas, to a charge of conspiracy to smuggle aliens into the United States.

Rustem Muho was named in a one count indictment returned on February 19, 2003. The defendant was arrested by agents of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Houston on January 28, 2003. The indictment charged Muho with one count of conspiracy to bring or attempt to bring aliens into the United States.

According to the indictment, between October, 2002, and January, 2003, the defendant conspired with other persons to bring Albanian nationals into the United States, using routes from Albania through Europe, Central America and Mexico. The defendant arranged for airline and land passage and paid for food and housing during the trip. Part of the journey involved hiding the smuggled aliens in the bathroom of a bus traveling from San Salvador, El Salvador, to Guatemala City, Guatemala. The defendant charged up to \$12,000 for illegal passage into the United States for trips that took as long as three months.

The maximum sentence for conspiracy is ten years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing will be on Aug. 14, 2003 before Judge Alia Moses Ludlam.

The indictment and plea are the result of on-going investigation into the smuggling of illegal aliens into the United States by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The case was prosecuted by trial attorney Anne Marie Farrar, from the Domestic Security Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, and Assistant United States Attorney Robert Cadena.

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